

THE **BUSAN** **DAILY** **Hollywood** **No.1** **REPORTER**

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BIFF Enters a Bold New Era

A striking film center, an expanded market and new leadership usher Asia's largest film festival into its 16th edition. p.2

Actor So Ji-sub and actress Han Hyo-joo attend a photocall for *Always*, the opening film of the 16th Busan International Film Festival



SPECIAL
.....
FEATURE

GAGA★

25th anniversary



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OCTOBER 7, 2011

JOBS TRIBUTE TWEETS

Leaders of Asia's creative and technology industries expressed shock and grief over the death of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs in the media, both social and traditional. Below is a sample of tributes and comments from around the region.

Australia

"Steve Jobs changed the way we think about how technology becomes a seamless part of our lives; our music, our phones, our wireless access to information, applications and each other. That will be his legacy."

— DAVID THODEY, CEO OF AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST TELCO TELSTRA CORP

China

"It's not easy to change your own life, but he changed so many lives. Old Jobs, Godspeed. I just hope you would have left us some more of your creations!"

— JAMES WANG ZHONGLEI, HUAYI BROTHERS MEDIA CORP PRESIDENT

"As a competitor, he helped ensure all of us pushed even harder. I am confident his legacy will continue to energize the industry for many years to come." — YANG YUANQING, CEO OF CHINESE COMPUTER MAKER LENOVO

"God wanted to use the iPhone 5, so he took Jobs back right after the iPhone 4S launch."

— CHINESE WEIBO USER

Hong Kong

"Life is unfortunately short. But Jobs's life wasn't wasted, he'd left so much for us to learn."

— GORDON CHAN, DIRECTOR OF PAINTED SKIN AND THE MURAL

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Asian Industry Shocked by Jobs Death

CEOs to fans on the street express grief at loss of visionary *By Steven Schwankert*

TECHNOLOGISTS, APPLE users and fans around Asia paid tribute to Steve Jobs, after learning of his passing early on Thursday morning.

Korea's IT industry reacted strongly to news of Jobs' passing.



Jobs

Choi Ji-seong, Vice-Chairman of Samsung Electronics told Chosun Ilbo, the nation's largest daily newspaper, that he sincerely expressed his regret about the death

of the former Apple CEO. "The deceased was a genius

entrepreneur who offered a vision to the global IT industry. His creative spirit and legendary achievements will not be forgotten."

Ahn Lab, a Korean security solution provider that sells antivirus software and network

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Han Hyo-joo stars as a woman losing her sight.



REVIEW

Always

Touching drama openly flirts with the familiar *By Kirk Honeycutt*

SONG IL-GON'S *ALWAYS* IS A SERIOUSLY sentimental movie. The intent here is not to avoid the clichés of sentimentality but to embrace them boldly. This is one of the few contemporary movies D.W. Griffith could easily love: He would recognize every element from the orphan and the blind girl to her puppy and the sick turtle.

While *Always* made a curious choice as a curtain-raiser for the 16th edition of the Busan International Film Festival, it may have been a smart move as the film reps a chance for local hero So Ji-sub to run the gamut of emotions (if not from A to Z then certainly to mid-alphabet). He thus keeps the talented-as-she-is-pretty Han Hyo-joo from stealing the show. The feel-good factor will get BIFF off to a festive start, but reviewers may not be kind so the film will need So's star power to sell this overripe melodrama in Asian markets.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

BIFF Gets an Extreme Makeover

Asia's largest cinema event boasts new name, home and leadership as part of long term "master plan" *By Lee Hyo-won*

THE 16TH EDITION OF Asia's largest cinema event sees the beginning of a new era — in addition to its updated acronym from PIFF to BIFF, it is also getting a new home, being spearheaded by new leaders and taking on new challenges.

The festival finally has an exclusive venue with the opening of the Busan Cinema Center, a "gravity-defying" structure by Austria-based Coop Himmelblau that has altered Busan's cityscape by pushing boundaries of architectural experimentation.

This new beginning also marks an end, as founding director Kim Dong-ho stepped down from leading the event for its first 15 installments.

"The festival had been synonymous with Kim Dong-ho," said commissioner Lee Yong-kwan, who now helms the festival alone after having co-directed the event with Kim. "Now that he has retired, the festival really sees the



The new Busan Cinema Center came with a price tag of \$150 million.

beginning of a whole new era — to grow under new wings. Having a new home and new name really symbolizes this great change. To be honest, making up for Mr. Kim's absence is enormous pressure."

Kim on the other hand feels a sense of relief. "BIFF has grown into Asia's largest film festival, and I can resign with a feeling of reassurance, though not without some feeling of regret; I feel like I'm marrying off a daughter I raised with care," he said.

BIFF will see enormous structural and logistical changes with the opening of the Cinema Center, as screenings will be limited to it and a handful of theaters in the Haeundae

area. Such transformations also extend to its business and academic initiatives as well.

This year BIFF will introduce an all-in-one market — the Asian Project Market (formerly Pusan Promotion Plan), Asian Film Market and Busan International Film Commission (BIFCOM). All had previously been held separately in different venues, but this year they will open simultaneously at the Busan BEXCO from Oct. 10 to 13.

"We have reached a certain level of success as a festival, but the market has not been as successful," Lee said. "We hope the expansion will contribute to the success of the market."

According to organizers, the

number of participating sales booths and market screenings has gone up considerably, with the number of sales booths up by 67 percent compared to 2010, while the ratio of participating firms saw a 14 percent increase.

As for market screenings, compared to last year's presentation of 39 works shown over 47 screenings, 60 films will be presented over 64 sessions this year. These will be offered in six rather than four theaters like in 2010.

The Asian Film Market will also offer online screenings. Last year the cyber service was limited to PC users but is now available for Mac OS, as well

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Hong Kong auteur Yonfan relishes his role as talent scout

BIFF jury head called "star maker" in Asian film world *By Karen Chu*

HONG KONG AUTEUR YONFAN IS quickly becoming the international festival circuit's best judge of young talent.

As head of the jury at the Busan International Film Festival New Currents competition, Yonfan is being asked to choose among the best new talents in Asia or elsewhere for the third time following stints at the Sydney Film Festival in May 2010, and then as the head of jury at

Hong Kong's Asian Film Awards last March.

In Busan Yonfan will head a jury that includes Chinese actress Jiang Wenli, Japanese actor Odagiri Joe, Korean producer Oh Jung-wan and former Cannes Film Festival programmer Olivier Père to judge a selection of 13 films from new directors across Asia.

It's a role he is especially comfortable with. Known as a star maker in the Asian



Yonfan

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To download a PDF of the The Hollywood Reporter's Busan Film Festival Daily, go to:
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JOBS TRIBUTE TWEETS

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"If a person can live his life this full, there should be nothing to regret. Steve Jobs, thank you for your contribution. Godspeed."

— DENISE HO, LEAD ACTRESS OF BIFF SELECTION *LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE* FROM DIRECTOR JOHNNIE TO

India

"Every word I've written, movie I've made has been on a Mac. For 25 years — from the original Mac to the present — I've been in a Steve Jobs world. You always thought of the 'rest of us.' Thank You Steve." — ARTHOUSE DIRECTOR AND WELL-KNOWN APPLE FANATIC DEV BENEGAL

"Well, the only person who could make some design improvements on heaven has just arrived there ...RIP Steve Jobs." — INDIAGAMES CEO VISHAL GONDAL

"No one comes close to your brilliance and creativity." — BOLLYWOOD ACTRESS SONAM KAPOOR

"He stood alone and challenged every perception by turning technology into an art form. RIP Steve Jobs." — DIRECTOR SHEKHAR KAPUR (*ELIZABETH*)

Japan

"He is a modern genius who combined art with technology. In hundreds of years people will look on him as they do Leonardo da Vinci." — SOFTBANK CEO MASAYOSHI SON

Korea

"A co-worker said last week that her five-year-old started begging for a mobile phone, saying, 'Mom, I need a cell phone...the one with a fruit painting on it, you know? I only want THAT.' RIP Steve Jobs."

— KOREAN FACEBOOK POST

"It feels like an end of an era, but his heritage will be left behind. It's sad news." — AHN LAB, A KOREAN SECURITY SOLUTION PROVIDER



From left, former Busan head Kim Dong-ho, TIFF director Tom Yoda and BIFF director Lee Yong-kwan show off their earthquake relief bracelets at an event in Cannes in May.

Joining Forces For a Good Cause

Tokyo fest hosts BIFF event to express gratitude for support during March quake *By Gavin Blair*

TOKYO — The Tokyo International Film Festival will hold an "Arigato" Gathering on Oct. 11 in Busan to say thank you for the support and sympathy that was sent to Japan from the global film industry after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, and to continue raising funds for the

said TIFF chairman, Tom Yoda.

TIFF has been raising money for environmental projects since 2008 when the green theme began at the festival, and this year will also collect funds to support film screenings in the northeast coastal regions hit by the tsunami.

“At Cannes we held an event to thank people for all the support we received from our friends around the world.” — TOM YODA, TIFF CHAIRMAN

victims of the disasters.

The event will be held on exactly seven months after the disaster, from 12pm to 2pm at the Hera Hall on the 4th floor of the Haeundae Centum Hotel.

The TIFF Arigato Project began at the Cannes International Film Festival in May as a way to express Japan's gratitude for the messages of help and encouragement it received after the March disasters.

"At Cannes we held an event to thank people for all the support we received from our friends around the world. We will also have an Arigato Gathering in Busan and hold events in Tokyo during TIFF at the end of Oct."

People making donations will be given an Arigato wristband and can record photo and text messages which will be displayed on screens around the festival and on the TIFF website. Messages and photos from the Cannes event are already on the festival website.

"We believe in the power of films to inspire people to pursue their dreams. In the hope that showing excellent films will contribute to Japan's recovery from the March earthquake and tsunami, we will organize the following relief efforts under the TIFF Arigato Project before and during the festival," said festival organizers in a statement. **THR**

Eurozone Returns to BIFF

By Stuart Kemp

LONDON — For the majority of European companies traveling to this year's Asian Film Market in Busan, it's all about repeat business, especially for those going with the blessing and financial fillip provided by trade body European Film Promotion, which supports a big dose of Eurozone activity annually at the Korean event.

EFP said that this year sees a record number of 31 movies travelling to Busan backed by the Film Sales Support system — available to European sales agents for the marketing of European films to Korea and the rest of Asia.

EFP also says 29 European film companies, 22 sales companies and seven EFP member organizations will land at the market, sheltering under the European umbrella.

"EFP recognizes that BIFF continues to grow in importance, not only regionally, but with the institution of the Asian Film Market, internationally," said EFP managing director Renate Rose.

The move to the Busan Exhibition Convention Center (BEXCO) this year has also heralded an uptick in interest from European shores.

Market regulars include Denmark's TrustNordisk, France's BAC Films and Germany's Beta Cinema.

Movies from across Europe are on offer to Asian buyers and beyond with titles such as *Best Intentions* by Adrian Sitaru and *Crulic*, *The Path to Beyond* by Anca Damian both from Romania, *Play* by Ruben Östlund from Sweden and *Almayer's Folly* by Chantal Akerman (Belgium / France). **THR**

Jobs

CONTINUED FROM 1

security appliances, said on the company's official Twitter page: "It feels like an end of an era, but his heritage will be left behind. It's sad news."

"He is a modern genius who combined art with technology. In hundreds of years people will look on him as they do Leonardo da Vinci," Softbank CEO Masayoshi Son said of Jobs from Japan.

China's microblogging site Weibo created a special page for tributes, which by late afternoon Thursday had received almost 36 million posts. "God wanted to use the iPhone 5, so he took Jobs back right after the iPhone 4S launch," one user posted. Weibo's parent company Sina.com made a separate commemoration page with articles and photos of the Apple founder. The country's largest online video site, Youku, created a 55-minute tribute to Jobs, comprised of his best presentations and speeches.

Fans and users placed white flowers — used traditionally in funerals in China — in front of the Apple Store in Beijing and at the newly opened store in Hong Kong.

The reaction caps a decade for Apple in China in which



Tribute sites like this one from Sina.com, one of China's largest web portals, appeared throughout Asia after news of Job's death broke.

it went from being relegated only to use by graphic designers and foreign owners, to having one of the hottest products on the market. Having made headway with the release of the iPod, Apple began to break through with the 2007 debut of the iPhone — although the first iPhone legally sold in China did not appear until Sept. 2010. Millions of "cracked" or "jail-broken" 2G and 3G iPhones — whose software had been altered to unlock them — became commonplace

in major Chinese cities. Demand for the iPhone 4 was so great that in late 2010 China's customs service launched a crackdown on travelers bringing them back from Hong Kong, where the phones were sold unlocked.

"As a competitor, he helped ensure all of us pushed even harder. I am confident his legacy will continue to energize the industry for many years to come," Yang Yuanqing, CEO of Chinese computer maker Lenovo, told CNN. **THR**

Yonfan

CONTINUED FROM 2

film world, Yonfan's cast lists are like a who's-who of Hong Kong cinema: Maggie Cheung and Jacky Cheung got their start with him, as did Daniel Wu, who took his first acting role in Yonfan's *Bishonen* in 1998 after the director spotted him in a television commercial.

"I think when you work with people with potential, it's challenging and enlightening" he said Yonfan. "They know you give them a long shot, to give them time to express themselves, so they give you their best."

While he downplays his reputation as star maker, the 63-year-old helmer says he will employ the same knack for spotting talent at Busan that he has employed throughout his career.

"I don't think you can call me a star maker," he said, "but I recognize beautiful things and I recognize talent. I have an eye to bring out the best of everything. I have an eye to bring out the best in Chow Yun-fat when he was working in the industry for a long time; to bring out the actress quality in Maggie Cheung when everyone at the time thought she was a slapstick comedienne and she did her first dramatic role with me."

Fans will be able to learn more about the director's technique when he publishes a Chinese-language memoir detailing his experiences at the end of the year.

For those who can't wait, Yonfan will present a master class on October 11 as part of a BIFF retrospective that will screen seven of his films, including *Double Fixation* and *Peony Pavilion*. **THR**

BIFF

CONTINUED FROM 2

as smartphones and digital tablets.

The festival is also aiming to strengthen its reputation as an event for theoretical and academic discourse.

While the festival has focused on the development of the film industry and networking, there hasn't been much effort in creating a platform for theoretical and academic discourse, says Lee. "We felt the need for more networking opportunities on a scholarly level."

And so it will inaugurate the Busan Cinema Forum, an academic event for filmmakers and scholars. This year, leading French industry magazine *Les Cahiers du Cinema* will spearhead the event with seminars and conferences, including an Oct. 11 discussion about the future of filmmaking in Asia attended by three of the region's top cineastes: Thailand's Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Hong Sang-soo and Bong Joon-ho, both from Korea.

The Institute also plans to promote cooperative projects between the industry and academic sectors later in the year. Revenue-generating endeavors the institute has in mind include expansion of online, IPTV and cable services that allow fans to watch Asian art house movies 365 days per year, instead of just the duration of the festival.

"This is all part of a master plan that will take a long time to realize," said Lee. "In the meantime, however, educational initiatives such as the Busan Cinema Forum will serve as a test. The response has been quite positive, though, and the number of registrations for the forum is much more than we ever imagined." **THR**

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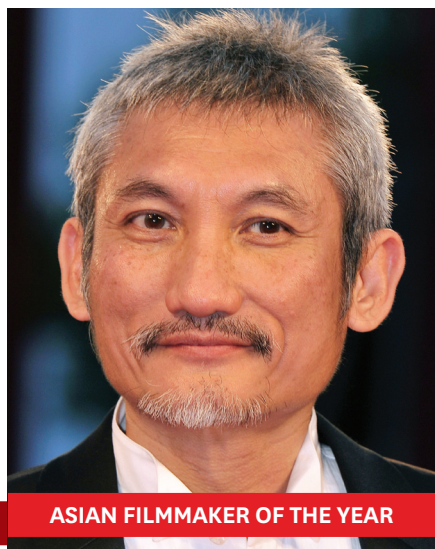
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Once Upon a Time in Busan

As he readies his next blockbuster, Tsui Hark talks about his respect for Korean cinema, looking to the past for inspiration and why he won't be retiring any time soon *By Karen Chu*



ASIAN FILMMAKER OF THE YEAR

THE MOST COMMERCIALY successful filmmaker to come out of the late 1970s cinema movement known as the Hong Kong New Wave, Tsui Hark has established himself as that rare auteur who can deliver at the box office. Lauded for revolutionizing the martial arts genre in hits like *Zu Warriors from the Magic Mountain* (1983) and the *Once Upon a Time In China* series (1991-7), Tsui kept his winning streak alive with last year's *Detective Dee and the Mystery of the Phantom Flame*, an effects-heavy period epic that grossed 300 million yuan in China. Named Asian Filmmaker of the Year by the Busan International Film Festival, Tsui recently took time out from post-production on his upcoming 3D release, *The Flying Swords of Dragon Gate*, to discuss his career.

How do you feel about being named Asian Filmmaker of the Year by BIFF?

Three years ago BIFF asked me to come and

teach a master class, to share my experience in filmmaking. Since then we've established a relationship with the festival organizers. I've stayed in Korea for longer periods of time and got to know more about the film industry, the historical background and development of the film culture here. My impression of Busan is quite different from the other places I've been to. I also talked to Korean filmmakers during the post-production process of *Detective Dee and the Mystery of the Phantom Flame*. I appreciate the Korean filmmakers' discipline, working style, and fighting spirit, all of which are qualities that not only I share, but are valuable factors when I consider future collaborations.

For BIFF to give me this award, I'm very honored and delighted. I feel it draws me closer to the Korean film industry and establishes between us a closer relationship as friends.

Why are you so attracted to new technology?

Part of my motivation at the beginning was affected by the historical factors of Hong Kong filmmaking. Because of the circumstantial constraints in Hong Kong, when we wanted to pursue stories set in a historical context or related to the geographic environment in China, we had little choice but to film in the few studio sets available. If there were problems during filming, we had to fix them during post-production. So I've established a closer relationship with the technical departments. But in view of the technological advancement of the international film industry, there has been a great deal of research and development that gave us a new approach to design, subject matter and mode of expression, which I find interesting. To me, film and technology are indivisibly entangled — film is an experiment of telling a story through technological means.



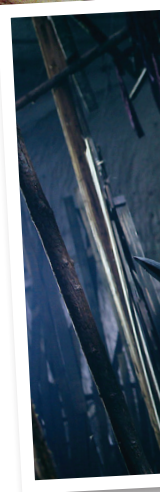
Tsui's 2006 epic *Seven Swords* was nominated for 11 Hong Kong film awards; *Detective Dee*, below, has been called the *Indiana Jones* of the East.

What, specifically, has technology allowed you accomplish?

If I want to shoot a dangerous action sequence, I can achieve it through visual effects technology without putting people in harm's way. That's one of the main reason we use technology in filmmaking. The other way it inspires me is the information we can get through technological means. The internet helps us know more about the world, beyond the confines of our geographical existence. In the long run, that affects our worldview. In other words, our worldview is now different from before. For instance, we weren't as familiar with Asian cinema in the past, but now we make films with an Asian crew, and deal with subject matter relevant or familiar to Asia. In this sense, technology obviously enhances development. It not only gives us convenience, but also provides us with references and comparisons. In the past, there were many instances of copying or replicating foreign films; nowadays with the international distribution network, there is less chance of copying, so that we can focus more on expanding our creativity.

Your recent films are set in specific historical periods. What do they reveal about the times we live in now?

I believe that period dramas have a special significance to the Chinese people. For instance, when I did *Once Upon a Time in China*, the central character, Wong





Fei-hung, was my childhood hero. By the time I was thirty, I realized times had changed and people had forgotten about or overlooked this heroic figure. I began to wonder whether it was worthy to retell his stories, and to see if the younger generation would appreciate him as much as we did. So out of curiosity, I tried to project the sense of excitement of

my childhood on screen. I always want to know how I relate to the present time, to the young generation. The period setting was only a means; it represents my personal likes and dislikes when I was growing up. To the Chinese people, history, or the idea of ancient China, is something that we would encounter since childhood. I wanted to see if we could find ourselves in that world of history or historical fiction; to find the link between that world and our world today.

What kind of challenges have you encountered while making your first 3D film, *The Flying Swords of Dragon Gate*?

The 3D filmmaking that I know now is simpler than I imagined. I've heard a lot of people with technical expertise telling me all kinds of stories about 3D filmmaking. But now I know only some of them are true. Working on it dispelled a lot of my worries. I used to hear that there needs to be a digital expert onset to do calculations, but now I know that's not necessary.

How excited are you to fulfill your childhood dream of making a 3D film??

(Laughs) The feeling is more than a sense of excitement – I've also learned something new about myself. Before, my enthusiasm was based on my susceptibility to 3D as an audience member. Now that I've learned about the technology behind 3D, I feel that I've gotten to know another side of me – someone who might have a lot of opinions about the technology. I think it's worthwhile for me.

What was it like to witness how Hong Kong cinema influenced global cinema in the 90s?

In the history of cinema, there had never been so many Chinese filmmakers working

in foreign countries as it was in the late 1990s to early 2000s. For a time, there was a strong influence of Hong Kong cinema in foreign films. Hong Kong is a place highly susceptible to foreign cultures, and in turn the filmmakers, including directors and action choreographers, were in demand in the international film industry. We're very fortunate that we had the opportunities to work on an international stage, then go to China to explore a new world. When the Chinese market opened, we realized we could make films in China. But since there's not a rating system in China, everyone, regardless of age, sees the same films, there is a limitation on the subject matter and content. We'd experienced something similar in Hong Kong in the 1980s and 1990s, when investors posed certain control on subject and content. There is still a lot of to be improved in the Chinese film industry in order to fulfill its full potential, but in the long run, I hope it would grow to be a counterpart of comparable influence as Hollywood in the international marketplace.

You're reuniting with your *Once Upon a Time in China* lead Jet Li on *Flying Swords*. How is it different this time?

It's been so long since Jet Li and I worked together, he brought along a lot of new perspectives, whether it was for the film itself or for his character. We have a deeper exchange of ideas in terms of choices.

After more than three decades, how do you view the present stage of your career?

At this stage I'm still looking for opportunities to make more films. I love making films; it's not as if there's something else I want to do and I'd have to wait until I retire to do it. Even if I retire, I'd still want to make movies. **THR**

TSUI'S TOP FIVE BOX OFFICE HITS



***Aces Go Places 3* (1984)**

The *Aces Go Places* series first landed in Hong Kong cinemas during the Chinese New Year of 1982, but Tsui took the helm in 1984 for the series' third installment, which raked in HK\$29.3 million to become the highest-grossing film of the year.

***A Better Tomorrow* trilogy (1986-9)**

Tsui produced the iconic John Woo-directed 1980s film series of the golden age of Hong Kong cinema, which took in a combined gross of HK\$76.2 million.

***Once Upon a Time in China* (1991-7)**

Tsui turned Jet Li into a superstar with this franchise about his childhood hero, martial arts master Wong Fei-hung. The six installments grossed HK\$133.7 million in Hong Kong.

***Seven Swords* (2005)**

Tsui's first major release in China grossed a respectable 87 million yuan in 2005, coming in third at the Chinese box office.

***Detective Dee and the Mystery of the Phantom Flame* (2010)**

The 300 million yuan-grossing blockbuster won Tsui his third best director award at the 30th Hong Kong Film Awards.

FESTIVAL SCREENING GUIDE

TODAY

9:30

(3D)Hara-Kiri: The Death of Samurai

126mins, Window on Asian Cinema, B1

Melancholia

136mins, World Cinema, BH

Misbegotten

117mins, Special Program

- Extreme Portuguese Cinema: Six Auteurs in Focus, B3

10:00

The Passion of a Man Called Choe Che-u

106mins, New Currents, B2

Wetlands

111mins, World Cinema, C4

Footnote

101mins, World Cinema, C6

Until That Day

96mins, Korean Cinema Retrospective - KIM Kee-duk, On the front line of Korean genre films, C7

Jump Ashin!

126mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L4

Barbie

97mins, Korean Cinema Today - Vision, L5

The Double Steps

87mins, World Cinema, M3

Lovely Man

76mins, Window on Asian Cinema, M1

A Letter to Momo

120mins, Wide Angle - Animation, M2

Always

108mins, Opening Film, CB

August Drizzle

108mins, New Currents, L8

Daughter... Father... Daughter

70mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L10

Perpetual Movements: A Cine Tribute to Carlos Paredes

68mins, Special Program - Extreme Portuguese Cinema: Six Auteurs in Focus, L9

Korean Short Film Competition 3

74mins, Wide Angle - Short Film Competition, C5

10:30

Breathing

93mins, World Cinema, C3

11:00

Ephemeral Weddings

84mins, World Cinema, CS

Yulu

88mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Showcase, C1

Missione di pace

90mins, World Cinema, C2

On the Ice

96mins, World Cinema, MM

Lucky

100mins, World Cinema, M8

Romance Joe

115mins, Korean Cinema Today - Vision, M4

Glove

144mins, Korean Cinema Today - Panorama, M6

Bishonen

101mins, Special Program - Special Focus on Yonfan: A Touch of Sensuality, L2

Manipulation

90mins, World Cinema, L3

Eternity

129mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L6

Eternity

129mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L7

Glove

144mins, Korean Cinema Today - Panorama, M7

Lucky

100mins, World Cinema, M9

LA-BAS - A Criminal Education

100mins, Flash Forward, LC

(3D)1920 Battle of Warsaw

115mins, World Cinema, CA

12:00

Jakarta Twilight

75mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L9

Baikonor

95mins, World Cinema, B3

Shoji & Takao

158mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Competition, C5

12:30

The Mirror Never Lies

100mins, New Currents, B1

Cut

133mins, Gala Presentation, BH

13:00

Tominaga Park

95mins, Window on Asian Cinema, B2

13:00

Death Is My Profession

90mins, Window on Asian Cinema, C3

Five Marines

118mins, Korean Cinema Retrospective - KIM Kee-duk, On the front line of Korean genre films, C7

Carte Blanche

91mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Showcase, C6

That Summer

95mins, World Cinema, L4

Celestial Kingdom

115mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L5

The Mystery of the Lagoons, Andean Fragments

92mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Showcase, M1

Hanji

118mins, Korean Cinema Today - Panorama, M3

Niño

100mins, New Currents, CB

Behold the Lamb

83mins, World Cinema, M2

I Carried You Home

115mins, New Currents, L8

Kisses

121mins, Korean Cinema Today - Panorama, L10

13:30

To Die Like a Man

133mins, Special Program - Extreme Portuguese Cinema: Six Auteurs in Focus, M9

To Die Like a Man

133mins, Special Program - Extreme Portuguese Cinema: Six Auteurs in Focus, M8

Nobel Thief

96mins, Window on Asian Cinema, C4

14:00

The Beaver



91mins, World Cinema, CS

Blood of My Blood

139mins, World Cinema Special Program - Extreme Portuguese Cinema: Six Auteurs in Focus, C2

The Golden Age of Korean Cinema & The Legend of Shin Film

80mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Showcase, C1

Ryang-kang-do: Merry Christmas, North!

95mins, Korean Cinema Today - Panorama, M4

Promising Miss Bowie

98mins, Special Program - Special Focus on Yonfan: A Touch of Sensuality, L2

Mask

83mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L3

Sunny(Director's Cut)

135mins, Korean Cinema Today - Panorama, L7, L6

The Idiot

132mins, Flash Forward, LC

Rebellion

136mins, World Cinema, CA

An Insignificant Harvey

79mins, World Cinema, MM

14:30

King of Devil's Island

115mins, World Cinema, M7, M6

15:00

The Barefooted Young

115mins, Korean Cinema Retrospective - KIM

Kee-duk, On the front line of Korean genre films, B3

15:30

Red Vavance Black Wedding

90mins, Korean Cinema Today - Panorama, B1

We Have a Pope

102mins, World Cinema, BH

16:00

Red Dog

92mins, World Cinema, Special Program - Another Face of Australian Cinema, C6

Rose

94mins, World Cinema, C7

The Sword and the Rose

142mins, Special Program - Extreme Portuguese Cinema: Six Auteurs in Focus, C3

Hankyu Railway - A 15-Minute Miracle

118mins, Window on Asian Cinema, M2

311

94mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Showcase, M1

The Day He Arrives

79mins, Korean Cinema Today - Panorama, M3

Guzaarish

126mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L4

Hard Core Logo II

94mins, World Cinema, L5

The Perfect Stranger

92mins, World Cinema, L8



Cut

Early One Morning
91mins, World Cinema, CB

Lost in the Mountain
95mins, New Currents, L10

16:30
Ari Ari the Korean Cinema
110mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Showcase, C4

The Peach Tree
120mins, Korean Cinema
Today - Vision, CS

Return to Burma
84mins, New Currents, B2

Korean Short Film Competition 2
74mins, Wide Angle - Short Film Competition, C5

17:00
Please Don't Beat Me, Sir!
75mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Competition, C1

170 Hz
86mins, World Cinema, C2

Hanaan
88mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L2

Hard Romanticker
109mins, Midnight Passion, L3

Corman's World: Exploits of a Hollywood Rebel
95mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Showcase, M4

The Great Bear
73mins, Wide Angle - Animation, M8

Goodbye First Love
110mins, World Cinema, MM

Life Without Principle
107mins, Gala Presentation, CA

Memories Corner
82mins, Flash Forward, LC

The Great Bear
73mins, Wide Angle - Animation, M9

17:30
Declaration of War
100mins, World Cinema, M7, M6

18:00
Eagle of Wild Field
93mins, Special Program - Special Focus on Asian Western: Men of the East, B3

Here... or There?
91mins, New Currents, L9

Life Back Then
131mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L6, L7

18:30
Joan and the Voices
67mins, Flash Forward, B1

19:00
Sholay
204mins, Special Program - Special Focus on Asian Western: Men of the East, C7

Barzakh
59mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Showcase, C6

Amen
72mins, Korean Cinema
Today - Panorama, M3

Taj
96mins, World Cinema, Special Program - Another Face of Australian Cinema, M1

Las Acacias
85mins, World Cinema, M8

(3D) A Fish
98mins, Korean Cinema
Today - Vision, L4

Yatasto
98mins, World Cinema, L5

Las Acacias
85mins, World Cinema, M9

Courage
88mins, Flash Forward, L8

The Address
100mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L10

Pink
97mins, Korean Cinema

Today - Panorama, CB

Korean Short Film Competition 1
77mins, Wide Angle - Short Film Competition, C5

19:30
Expecting
85mins, World Cinema, M2

Watch Indian Circus
101mins, New Currents, B2

20:00
The Seventh Bullet
84mins, Special Program - Special Focus on Asian Western: Men of the East, C2

Talking Architect
95mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Showcase, C1

The Baron
98mins, World Cinema
Special Program - Extreme Portuguese Cinema: Six Auteurs in Focus, CS

Beautiful Miss Jin
98mins, Korean Cinema
Today - Vision, C4

Dangerously Excited
101mins, Korean Cinema
Today - Vision, C3

The Bad Intentions
107mins, World Cinema, M4

Kotoko
91mins, Window on Asian Cinema, MM

Goodbye
104mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L2

From Seoul to Varanasi
96mins, Korean Cinema
Today - Panorama, L3

God's Own Child
146mins, Open Cinema, BT

A Reason to Live
119mins, Gala Presentation, CA

Mangrove
70mins, World Cinema, LC

20:30
The Good, The Bad, The Weird
130mins, Special Program - Special Focus on Asian Western: Men of the East, M6, M7

21:00
Gypsy
107mins, World Cinema, L6

Gypsy
107mins, World Cinema, L7

Phantom
90mins, Special Program - Extreme Portuguese Cinema: Six Auteurs in Focus, B3

Nuit #1
91mins, Flash Forward, B1

Sea of Butterfly
90mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Competition, L9

23:59
Midnight Passion 1
335mins, Midnight Passion, BH

TOMORROW
9:00
We Need to Talk about Kevin
112mins, World Cinema, BH

Otelo Burning
90mins, World Cinema, B1

The Idiot
132mins, Flash Forward, B2

10:00
Get a Life
115mins, Special Program - Extreme Portuguese Cinema: Six Auteurs in Focus, B3

That Summer
95mins, World Cinema, C4

A Hundred-Year Journey of the Family
133mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Competition, C5

Grave Encounters
92mins, Midnight Passion, CS

The Hunter
102mins, World Cinema
Special Program - Another Face of Australian Cinema, C6

Buy My Fist
112mins, Korean Cinema
Retrospective - KIM Kee-duk, On the front line of Korean genre films, C7

Los Viejos
72mins, World Cinema, L5

11 Flowers
120mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L4

Karla's Arrival
88mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Showcase, M1

Choked
110mins, New Currents, M3

The Sword and the Rose
142mins, Special Program - Extreme Portuguese Cinema: Six Auteurs in Focus, MM

Habibi
78mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L9

Watch Indian Circus
101mins, New Currents, L8

Jakarta Twilight
75mins, Window on Asian Cinema, L10

Fable of the Fish
85mins, Window on Asian Cinema, CB

El Gusto
88mins, Wide Angle - Documentary Showcase, M2

11:00
Wu Xia
115mins, Gala Presentation, CA

Mourning
84mins, New Currents, LC

Sleeping Sickness
91mins, World Cinema, M6, M7

Always
108mins, Opening Film, M8, M9

Donkeys
93mins, World Cinema, M4

Wetlands
111mins, World Cinema, L3

Double Fixation
96mins, Special Program - Special Focus on Yonfan: A Touch of Sensuality, L2

Restless
91mins, World Cinema, L6

Restless
91mins, World Cinema, L7

Tears of the Black Tiger
104mins, Special Program - Special Focus on Asian Western: Men of the East, C3

Early One Morning
91mins, World Cinema, C2

God's Own Child
146mins, Open Cinema, COMC

Perpetual Movements: A Cine Tribute to Carlos Paredes, 68mins
Special Program - Extreme Portuguese Cinema: Six Auteurs in Focus, C1

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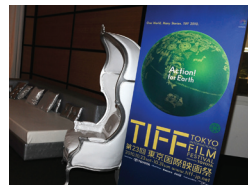
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Song Il-Gon

The art house filmmaker sets his sights on mainstream success with the poignant BIFF opener *Always* *By Soomee Park*

TO MANY KOREAN MOVIEGOERS director Song Il-gon is a vaguely familiar name. Even after winning the Jury Prize at Cannes for Best Short Film with *Picnic* in 1999, Song's films never moved beyond the art house world. So in many ways *Always* — the opening film of this year's Busan International Film Festival — is a drastic departure from Song's previous work. Starring a cast of well-known TV actors, the film's storyline is shamelessly melodramatic as it depicts a romance between a former boxer (played by So Ji-seob) and a telephone operator (Han Hyo-joo) who's slowly losing her sight. *The Hollywood Reporter* recently caught up with Song after his last touch-up of *Always* before the festival's opening.

Would you agree that *Always* marks a major transition in your film career?

I do. I think that every time I finish shooting a film, but with this one I really felt that I'm beginning all over again, mostly because I am about to make films that I hope will be seen by popular audiences.

***Always* comes across as a commercial melodrama. Did this put some pressure on you as director?**

The film was inspired by Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights*. I wanted to make a film set in Seoul about a man who gives up everything for a woman and a woman who waits for the man. The story was simple, but it took me about two years to finish writing it. It was a long process. But because there are so many melodramas I focused on the characters. That was the most difficult part of it all. I ended up spending most of my time and energy on the emotional development of the characters through the two young, passionate and talented actors — So Ji-seob and Han Hyo-joo.

You've always been considered an art house filmmaker. What made you want to make a film for mainstream audiences?

I never intended to make an art house film. The

kind of films I've been making since I was 30 happened to be those films. But I did go through a transitional phase shortly before shooting *Always*. I always enjoyed watching genre films, and I want to start making those films. I still think I'm young for a filmmaker. And since the films I want to be making from now on would require more investment I want to find my own style through good stories and new genres.

Your films are often quite melancholy. Do you admire such sentiment artistically?

Many directors and artists go through phases and various influences. I started making films when I was in my late 20s and at the time I was interested in the notion of pain in a man. I think the introspection of Dostoevsky [for example] is a necessary phase for every artist. But increasingly I find my films changing. There is a lot more humor and brighter characters.

Many filmmakers say that screenwriting is the most painstaking phase of the filmmaking process. Would you agree?

I write all my scripts and yes it is the most painful thing in the world. I'll be the happiest man if someone could kindly pass me a well-written script.

You studied filmmaking in Poland. Would you agree that the conceptual qualities in your films are influenced by European cinema? What kind of films did you watch when you were a student and who were your influencers?

A concept is an important element in my work. A concept is a difficult notion to understand when it's approached literally but it can reflect a great deal of human values when expressed well. Many of my film admirers are Europeans and they've been influenced by my work greatly. I'm influenced by film masters of various styles including Krzysztof Kieslowski, Ingmar

Bergman, Federico Fellini, Andrei Tarkovsky and Robert Bresson.

Can you talk about your next project?

I've got many scripts in my head including a blockbuster with plenty of CG, hard-boiled action, a 1940s detective film, a musical film and another romance. But first I'm looking forward to the audience response to *Always*. **THR**

VITAL STATS

Nationality South Korean
Born January 1, 1971
Festival Entry *Always*
(Opening film)

Selected Filmography
Picnic (1999), *Flower Island*
(2001), *Spider Forest*
(2004), *Magicians* (2005),
Dance of Time (2009)

Notable awards Jury Prize
for Best Short Film at Cannes
Film Festival (1999), Grand Prix
at Melbourne International
Film Festival (1999)

REVIEWS

Always

CONTINUED FROM 1

Han plays a telemarketer going blind at an alarming rate, but her impairment does present the opportunity for a pretty decent “meet cute”: She slides into a parking garage attendant’s booth, assuming the occupant to be the old man usually there. Instead, well into her effusive greeting, she discovers a much younger though sullen occupant. This is So’s character, an ex-boxer whose past has rendered him non-communicative.

Despite the new occupant, the girl stays to “watch” a soap opera on a small TV set, asking the attendant questions about the heroine’s clothing and shoes. A few more nights of such viewings draw the reclusive man out of his shell.

When she asks what he looks like, he reluctantly concedes, “People say I look manly.” When she asks about his past, the night — which happens to be their first date — goes badly but at her door he reluctantly concedes to have been “a really bad boy.”

A rather implausible event in both their pasts connected them long before, but this is one of the movie’s twists that urge on a narration that threatens to stall as Song

sends them off to frolic in fields and the boxer to buy his girl a puppy. (To be fair, it’s a practical gift as he intends the puppy to become her seeing-eye dog.)

Now the melodrama comes hot and heavy. She needs an immediate eye operation if she will ever see again. The only way he can raise the dough is through mortal combat in an illegal Bangkok fight club. An old adversary, criminal thugs, a fight to the death followed by a brutal mugging rush the story to a second-act climax that gives way to a languid and syrupy “two years later” third act.

Signaling his every intention to revel in conventions he avoided in the past, Song Il-gon, who co-wrote the script with No Hong-jin, cues the strings for one scene and lays in a tinkling piano over another. Once an auteurist trained at the National Academy of Film in Łódź, Poland, Song saw his films hit the festival circuit but get shunned in commercial houses. For this outing, he throws down a gauntlet to audiences. His craft is undeniable: He invests every filmmaking and emotional trick he can in the relentless clichés. And his two actors do achieve a potent chemistry in their scenes together (which comprise over two-thirds of the movie).



So Ji-sub and Han Hyo-joo star in Song Il-gon's contemporary melodrama.

The director means for you to gasp at the audacity of the dramatic coincidences and clichés. Call this the Revenge of the Auteurist. You see, he seems to say, I can make a thoroughly commercial movie and even give it some heart. An artificial heart, to be sure, but you can’t have everything.

So Ji-sub delivers an assured low-key, natural performance without a single wink at the audience. The story logically allows him to show off his pectorals,

athleticism and thespian skills. Han Hyo-joo is sweetness personified, a young woman who won’t allow a handicap to dampen her vivaciousness.

But there is no impetus, either with the characters or their behavior, to get beneath the glossy surface. The film refuses to look at anything that triggers the heightened emotions on shameless display. There is no deep investigation into cultural mores, social themes or ironies the filmmaker



Liu Wenqing stars as a young boy growing up in southwest China.

11 Flowers

Chinese director Wang Xiaoshuai evokes memories of provincial life prior to Mao’s death *By Maggie Lee*

1 FLOWERS IS WANG XIAOSHUAI’S BITTERSWEET EVOCATION of Chinese provincial life during the repressive ‘70s through the eyes of a boy who becomes an uncomprehending witness to a youth crime and its harsh consequences. Shot in a nostalgic, personal tone, the film benefits from Wang’s mastery of narrative innuendo and his lucid, unsentimental observation. Reminiscent of film adaptations of Marcel Pagnol’s novels, it should resonate with a quasi-art house audience as reassuringly humanist.

The film is set in a rural town in southwest China in 1975, a year before Mao’s death, unfolding via the subjective view of 11-year-old Wang Han (Liu Wenqing). Although the days seem carefree for boys like him, deprivations of that era are softly insinuated from the outset. When Han is appointed school gym leader and told to wear a



could easily have explored.

Rather the film is stitched together from old (very old) movies while its lyrical visual style comes from TV commercials. You can imagine the director brushing aside the criticism he knows he will attract. There are not clichés, he might say, but timeless themes.

Opening Night Film

Cast *So Ji-sub, Han Hyo-joo*

Production company:
HB Entertainment in

association with 51k

Director *Song Il-gon*

Screenwriters: *No Hong-jin, Song Il-gon*

Producer: *Moon Bomi*

Director of photography:
Hong Kyung-pyo

Production designer: *Kim Hyun-ok*

Music: *Bang Jun-suk*

Costume designer: *Ki Kyang-mi*

Editor: *Nam Na-young*

Sales: *Showbox/Mediaplex Inc.*
No rating, 106 minutes

outset. When Han is appointed school gym leader and told to wear a new shirt, it raises a family furor because that would eat up a year's cloth ration. A symbol of soiled innocence, the shirt eventually plays a pivotal role in his encounter with Jueqiang (Wang Ziyi), a teenage fugitive hiding in the woods.

Jueqiang's crime, as well as the tragedy that befalls his sister Juehong (Mo Shiyi) are tactfully implied, as are the telltale signs of violence and repressiveness in daily life, such as the savage gang wars between Red Guards and ideological struggles at work that injure and trouble Han's father (Wang Jingchun).

Shot in Chongqing, *11 Flowers* not only shares the same location as Wang's *Shanghai Dreams* and *Chongqing Blues*, some of their themes also re-emerge, namely the frustration and disillusionment of intellectuals who are "sent down" from cities to work in rural collectives, and the anguish of youth in a society blind to injustice and intolerant of protest. In Wang's rendering of a generation that meekly internalizes pain and disillusionment, what haunts one most is the outsider's sense of impotence in the face of a fellow human's misfortune,



Kirsten Dunst stars as a less-than-happy bride to be.

REVIEW IN BRIEF

Melancholia

Lars von Trier contemplates the planet's demise

LARS VON TRIER MANAGES TO TURN THE END OF THE WORLD INTO A bit of a bore in *Melancholia*. A brooding cross between *The Celebration* and *Armageddon* drenched in the tragic romanticism of Richard Wagner, this contemplation of the planet's demise predictably provides not an ounce of comfort or redemption, nor does it offer characters or ideas with which to meaningfully engage, just ample opportunity to wallow in some rapturous images, glorious music and a foul mood.

The prelude to *Melancholia* offers enticements: Amplified by the darkly yearning strains of "Tristan und Isolde," von Trier begins with a beautiful close-up of bride-to-be Kirsten Dunst's face — expressing what can only be described as pronounced melancholy — and follows with a slow progression of strikingly dramatic and often strange images, including galactic phenomena, a golf course, some planets, the sun and moon, a dark horse falling and Dunst in repose. The sequence climaxes with a literally shattering shot of the Earth breaking apart as it crashes into a much larger planet.

In the end *Melancholia* would seem to have two purposes: To express the state of deep depression the director has so often described his being in for the last several years, and to articulate his non-belief in anything beyond our temporal presence on this rock.

For von Trier, there is no meaning, higher purpose or anything resembling Godliness, just obliteration and the void.

emphasized by Han's blurred, half-comprehending vision: P.O.V. shots show him seeing things underwater, through bathhouse steam, from atop a hill or through a thicket. Fortunately, more than in his other films, Wang allows greater warmth to suffuse family relations (enhanced by the old-world Gallic accordion music), especially during time Han spends alone with his Quixotic, art-loving father.

Even with a young cast, not a single actor can be tasked for being over-demonstrative. Except for ballsy comedienne Yan Ni's unrecognizably down-to-earth presence as an irascible-but-loving mother, the film suffers from a lack of emotionally charged central performances. Meticulous artistic standards ensure the period's drab, frugal lifestyle is convincingly recreated, contrasted by a majestic mountain backdrop.

Window on Asian Cinema

Cast: *Liu Wenqing, Yan Ni, Wang Buqu, Mo Shiyi, Wang Ziyi, Cao Shiping*

Director-screenwriter: *Wang Xiaoshuai*

Poongsang

A blistering political thriller that transcends some awkward moments *By Maggie Lee*

YOON KYE-SANG, KIM Gyu-ri and Kim Jong-soo star in director Juhn Jai-hong's political romance-thriller.

Written and produced by Kim Ki-duk, and helmed by his former assistant director Juhn Jai-hong (*Beautiful*), *Poongsan* injects new life into Korean North-South espionage thrillers with its edgy portrayal of a mysterious man who crosses the DMZ to provide a unique kind of courier service. From its heart-wrenching opening shot to its breathtaking end, the film is unfaltering in its momentum and often unbearable in its intensity, delivering shocks to the system as it runs the extraordinary gamut of love, jealousy, hate, desperation, cruelty and madness.

The nameless protagonist (Yoon Kye-sang) is a trafficker who crosses the high security border between North and South to deliver anything from cherished digital videos or personal keepsakes to refugees for families separated by the civil war. He is commissioned

to go to Pyongyang to smuggle In-oak (Kim Gyuri), the lover of a high-profile North Korean defector (Kim Jong-soo) to the South. An inexplicable frisson occurs on the way, and their unspoken, yet uncontrollable, love becomes a catalyst for a powder keg situation on a government level.

The film's angle on North-South relations is compellingly darker and more cynical than typically simplified and ideologically slanted Korean spy thrillers. Agents from both sides are represented as thugs nearly indistinguishable in their skullduggery and incompetence. The whole absurdity of their opposition is symbolized in a savagely humorous scene where they are thrown into a dungeon and end up tearing at each other like gutter rats.

In fact, the theme is betrayal at various levels. As In-oak, the defector and even some agents gradually learn the futility of loyalty (personal or political) and the price of "freedom," a sense of abject disillusionment prevails.

This makes the trafficker almost an anti-hero for having



An unlikely romance develops between Yoon Kye-sang and Kim Gyuri.

no allegiances. In-oak compares the trafficker with the logo of his favorite cigarette "Poongsan": "like a dog that's lost its owner." But he is more of a lone wolf. Armed with SWAT skills, he never utters a syllable and one never finds out where he's from or which side he's on (not even when tortured). His motive for crossing borders at such risk is never articulated until the provocative ending, which hints at a reason both surprisingly innocent and deeply humane.

The screenplay is heaped with jarring twists and coincidences, revealing the same credibility issues that plague

many of Kim's own works. Despite the broad, often inconsistent range of tones, Juhn's focus on the characters' physical instincts infuses most scenes with riveting urgency and visual impact. Juhn shares his mentor Kim's gift in representing violence in a shocking, subversive style, making bodily hazards seem extremely palpable. There are torture scenes that require an iron gut to stomach, yet the worst moments play like black comedy. Dialogue, which is often stilted, thankfully plays a subordinate role.

At the center of all events is a love that erupts out of nowhere,

REVIEW IN BRIEF



Wu Xia will be released in the U.S. under the title *Dragon*.

Wu Xia

Director Peter Ho-sun Chan effectively blends mystery and martial arts

BURSTING WITH LIGHT AND COLOR, AND A TORRENT OF MARTIAL ARTS action both swift and savage (arguably the best that lead actor Donnie Yen has choreographed for years), *Wu Xia* is coherently developed and stylishly directed by Peter Ho-Sun Chan to provide unashamedly pleasurable popular entertainment. Almost as picturesque as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the film has a chance of expanding overseas audience base beyond Asian genre ghettos.

Donnie Yen plays paper-maker Liu Jinxi, who has settled in an idyllic, hospitable village in Yunnan for ten years after marrying single mother Ayu (Tang Wei). The peaceful life of his family of four is disturbed when he accidentally kills two robbers who threaten his workshop. The incident has detective Xu Baijiu (Takeshi Kaneshiro) sniffing in his backyard. Xu is convinced that Liu's real identity is Tang Long, a runaway member of the 72 Demons, a dwindling clan of Tanguts (former rulers of China's neighboring Xia kingdom) for whom rape, pillage and massacre are a way of life.

What makes the exposition novel in the genre is the attempt to peel away layers of oriental mystique surrounding martial arts through Xu's quasi-scientific or homeopathic theories of investigation, such as forensic science,



defying politics, morality or even common sense. The clumsy way in which the lovers come together actually gives the relationship its heady unpredictability, climaxing in a kiss scene that is electrifying because it happens in the most unlikely circumstance.

Without any dialogue or character history to fall back on, Yoon cultivates a bon sauvage image with animalistic grunts and physical dexterity. Kim's way of interpreting In-oak's headstrong yet wide-eyed nature is to be a continuous nag. If not for the burning intensity Yoon brings to their love scenes, one would be hard pressed to

feel sympathy for her.

Korean Cinema Today
— **Panorama**

Production company: *Kim Ki-duk Film Production*

Cast: *Yoon Kye-sang, Kim Gyu-ri, Kim Jong-soo*

Director: *Juhn Jai-hong*

Screenwriter-original idea-executive producer:
Kim Ki-duk

Producer: *Jeon Youn-chan*

Director of photography:
Lee Jeong-in

Production designer: *Yang Hoon-sub*

Music: *Park In-young*

Costume designer: *Yu Cheong*
No rating, 121 minutes

physics, acupuncture and qigong, which also adds an endearingly nerdy side to his character. However, the CG-rendered charts of human anatomy are used too frequently until they interfere with the flow of action.

As a self-conscious homage to the brawny, starkly violent martial arts films of which Chang Cheh's classic *One Armed Swordsman* series (starring Jimmy Wang Yu) is exemplary, Yen devises close-contact combat with a graphic, muscular, vicious style that aims to kill with a single strike. The three act structure each showcases a climactic fight in distinctly different styles. Liu's fight with a female Tangut (Kara Hui) is the most inventive, as it takes place in an ox pen where they have to skirt nimbly, yet dangerously, around a stampede of buffalo.

Jake Pollock's luscious widescreen cinematography adds a dash of fairytale color to the moist, glossy rolling hills, meadows and bamboo bushes of the ethnically-rich Yunnan countryside. While hard rock score of Peter Kam and Chan Kwong Wing (the composing duo of *Bodyguards and Assassins*, produced by Chan) tends to be too relentlessly energetic at times, sound is used expertly for maximum threatening effect, especially in the presence of the chief of the 13 Demons (Jimmy Wang Yu).

The Tree of Life

Brad Pitt shines in Terrence Malick's existential drama about the travails of a 1950s family

BRANDISHING AN AMBITION IT'S LIKELY NO FILM, INCLUDING THIS one, could entirely fulfill, *The Tree of Life* is nonetheless a singular work, an impressionistic metaphysical inquiry into mankind's place in the grand scheme of things that releases waves of insights amid its narrative imprecisions. This fifth feature in Terrence Malick's eccentric four-decade career is a beautiful creation that ponders the imponderables, asks the questions that religious and thoughtful people have posed for millennia and provokes expansive philosophical musings along with intense personal introspection.

As such, it is hardly a movie for the masses and will polarize even buffs, some of whom might fail to grasp the connection between the depiction of the beginnings of life on Earth and the travails of a 1950s Texas family. There are great, heady things here, both obvious and evanescent, more than enough to qualify this as an exceptional and major film.

Working in a manner diametrically opposed to that of theater dramatists inclined to spell everything out, Malick opens cracks and wounds by inflection, indirection and implication. Using fleet camerawork and jump-cutting that combine to intoxicating effect, the picture builds to unanticipated levels of disappointment and tragedy, much of it expressed with a minimum of dialogue in the final stages of Brad Pitt's terrific performance.



We Have a Pope

Nanni Moretti finds laughs in Papal intrigue

IT'S A PITY THAT WE HAVE A POPE, THE ENGLISH TITLE OF NANNI

Moretti's gently amusing tale about a newly elected Pontiff who refuses to take office, wasn't left in the original Latin. *Habemus Papam*, the words by which a new Pope is announced to the world, conveys the skewed overlay of Catholic tradition and bizarre otherworldliness that give the film its unique comic tone, assisted by a rapturous performance by Michel Piccoli in the central role and Moretti in top acting form as his would-be psychoanalyst.

Fans of Moretti the political activist and beacon of uncomfortable truths will wonder where he left the mordant, oft-times savage humor of *Mass Is Over* and his Silvio Berlusconi send-up, *The Caiman*. Here the storyteller overpowers the moralist in every sense. Not a hint of clerical sex scandals clouds the surreal image of frolicking white-haired Cardinals; the most critical line in the film suggests the Church needs a leader who will bring great change, but even that plays as an offhand remark.

What makes the film memorable, in the end, are the characters, particularly Piccoli's wrenching portrait of the frail old Cardinal, who painfully rummages through a lifetime of human experience to reach a few words of wisdom. On a completely different register, Moretti lights up every scene he's in as the brash, bossy shrink (a role he played in *The Son's Room*) married to another obsessed analyst (Margherita Buy, virtually the only female character in this boys' movie). Stuhr and Scarpa stand out in the sea of Vatican dwellers, though the ultra-nice Cardinals, many of whom are non-pro actors, hold their own.

BUSAN MEMORIES

DOUBLE TAKE:

Actor and producer Andy Lau playfully quiets the crowd during an Open Talk session at BIFF '06, where he was named Asian Filmmaker of the Year for producing blockbusters like the 2010 comedy *The Gallants* and the upcoming *A Simple Life*, in which he also stars.



PHOTO: CHUNG SUNG-JUN/GETTY IMAGES

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OCTOBER 31

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- Spotlight on Latin America
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- Q&As
- Reviews

Bonus Circulation: All major hotels, including the Loews and Merigot

Materials Deadline: October 26

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*editorial coverage subject to change

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